

marsh estate

A HUNTER ICON



In my recent visit to the Hunter Valley I had the good fortune to once again call in at Marsh Estate Wines.

Marsh Estate grows only the classic varieties of Semillon and Chardonnay in the whites and Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot in the reds. The Lower Hunter Valley makes some of

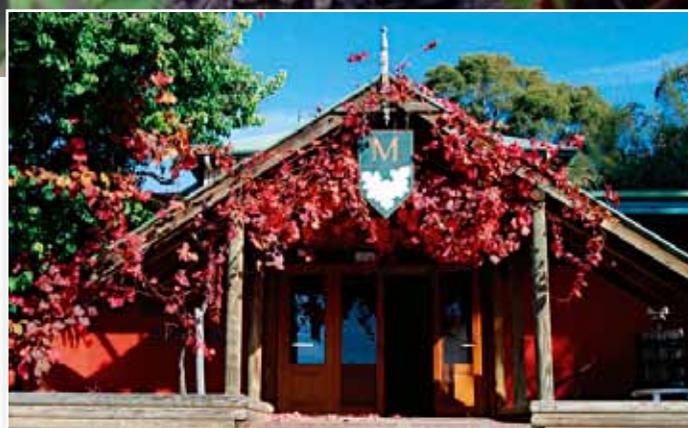
the best white wines in Australia and, for some enthusiasts, has the most regionally pronounced styled red wines in the world. Marsh Estate is unique in that the grapes are not irrigated and unlike some other wineries, all the grapes used for the winemaking are grown on the property.

Planted in 1971, with the first labelled wines being released in 1978, the 100 acre property contains sandy loam soil on the flats surrounding Rothbury Creek with rich, fertile, red volcanic soil on the ridge. The grey sandy loam soil is a deposit from the Rothbury Creek and the great Semillons from the Hunter are famous because of these creek bed deposits. The red volcanic deposits are a perfect haven for Shiraz.

Andrew Marsh spent his early life waiting to make wine at Marsh Estate where he now makes the wine at Marsh Estate and has been for some 20 years. As you drive through the gates the first blocks on the right are Semillon whilst on the left, over the small bridge, is the "Holly's Block" Semillon. Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot also thrive in the sandy loam soils.

The Vat S Shiraz is grown on the most easterly facing block which relies on the early morning direct sunlight to ripen whilst the Vat R Shiraz is grown on the more westerly facing block and relies on the afternoon filtered sunlight to ripen.

The three wines I tasted that are worth discussing is the



Private Bin Shiraz block is planted down the steep south-east block giving it a different aspect and drainage and the Cabernet Sauvignon Vat N which is planted to the left of the house and benefits from its south-west perspective.

2009 PRIVATE BIN SHIRAZ

Made from 100% non-irrigated, low yielding Shiraz grapes is grown on red volcanic soil from the house block. The wine again displays classic varietal characters combined with regional distinctiveness. Stored in a selection of premium French oak for 12 months it is cellaring well.

2009 CABERNET

The Cabernet Sauvignon VAT "N" is made from 100% Cabernet Sauvignon from the house block. It is medium, plum red in colour with lots of spice and cherry characters with soft, velvet tannins. Stored in French oak for 12 months it is worth buying a dozen or so.

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Greg Bondar
Food and Wine Editor

THE OLIVE TREE *restaurant*

No need to hand an olive branch here as this restaurant is a must for any visitor to the Hunter Valley.



Located at the historic Wyndham Estate Winery on the banks of the Hunter River, The Olive Tree Restaurant offers alfresco dining in a spectacular country setting. With views from every table of manicured vines, the winding Hunter River and a rugged mountainous backdrop, it is the ideal place for a long leisurely lunch with family and friends.

Interestingly the Wyndham Estate is the Hunter Valley's oldest working winery where vines were first planted by George Wyndham in 1831. His heritage listed house is a National Trust treasure and forms part of a Heritage Walk through vineyards and along the Hunter River.

At the launch of the new venture Chef Andrew said, "we are very excited with our new project which ties in with the catering that we have been providing at Wyndham Estate since 2008. I feel that this is the perfect opportunity for me to produce some honest and hearty food in the rustic Mediterranean style that I love."

The Menu includes entrees such as antipasto plates, risottos and seasonal fare, whilst the mains offer juicy steaks, a range of quality meats cooked on the char grill and traditional Sunday roasts with all the trimmings.

Aimed at both the day tripper it also caters for the locals of Branxton and surrounding areas. There are plans for regular weekend activities for families on the Wyndham grounds but the real attraction is the spectacular scenery that Wyndham offers.

Open on Sunday for Breakfast it is also open Saturday and Sunday for Lunch.



The Olive Tree
RESTAURANT

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Food and Wine Editor

